

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1535

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6981

FOR EAGLEBURGER, LAISE AND CONNOLLY, NEA/EX, FROM HUNT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AFSP, APER, LE

SUBJECT: STAFFING FOR BEIRUT

1. AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS OF OPERATING WITH AN AMERICAN STAFF OF 15, WHICH WILL DROP TO 14 WITH MY DEPARTURE, I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU MY OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON STAFFING LEVEL AND TOURS OF DUTY.

A. TOURS OF DUTY. THE PEOPLE THAT WE HAVE HERE ARE AMONG THE MOST DEDICATED AND SELF-RELIANT PEOPLE THAT I HAVE WORKED WITH, BUT IT WOULD BE UNREASONABLE FOR US TO EXPECT THEM TO LIVE AND WORK IN THIS CONFINED ENVIRONMENT FOR TOO LONG A PERIOD. AS YOU KNOW, THEY WORK, EAT AND SLEEP IN THE CHANCERY, AND WE DO NOT KNOW HOW LONG THIS SITUATION WILL CONTINUE. EXCEPT FOR THOSE OF US WHO HAVE OUTSIDE APPOINTMENTS, THE OTHERS ARE VIRTUALLY NEVER OUTSIDE THE CHANCERY BUILDING. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF FILMS, WHICH MOST OF THE STAFF HAS SEEN SEVERAL TIMES OVER, THERE ARE NO RECREATIONAL OR DIVERSIONAL FACILITIES WHATSOEVER.

I RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE SOME WHO WILL BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT NORMAL ASSIGNMENTS TO BEIRUT EVEN UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES DESCRIBED ABOVE, AND THEY SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO DO SO. FOR THE MOST PART, I THINK WE WILL FIND IN TIME THAT EVEN THESE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CURTAIL THEIR TOURS IF SITUATION DOES NOT IMPROVE, AND THEY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DO
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SO. THE ARGUMENT THAT A LONGER TOUR IS NECESSARY

IN ORDER TO GET R&R, VISITATION TRAVEL, ETC. JUST DOES NOT HOLD UP WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE UNSAFE AND DIFFICULT WAYS WE HAVE OF GETTING OUT OF LEBANON. IN MY OPINION WE SHOULD MAKE NORMAL ASSIGNMENTS IF WE CAN, BUT BE PREPARED TO PROVIDE SIX-MONTHS AND ONE-YEAR TOURS, OR GO TO THREE TO SIX MONTHS TDY AS NECESSARY. SUCH RAPID CHANGEOVER OF STAFF COULD REDUCE EFFICIENCY OF POST, BUT IF WE ARE CAREFUL, MOST MEMBERS OF STAFF CAN FUNCTION VERY WELL IN TODAY'S ENVIRONMENT WITHOUT GREAT DEAL OF SETTling IN. I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT GOOD EMPLOYEES WHO MIGHT TURN DOWN FULL TOUR AT THIS POST WILL ACCEPT DEPT'S CALL FOR SHORT TOUR EITHER ON TDY OR AS AN ASSIGNMENT. IF WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO SHORT, FLEXIBLE TOUR-OF-DUTY POLICY AND INSURE THAT EMPLOYEE IS REPLACED PROMPTLY AT END OF HIS TOUR, I THINK WE CAN KEEP THIS PALCE STAFFED WITH QUALIFIED PEOPLE AND MORALE CAN REMAIN HIGH. WITH SUCH A SMALL STAFF IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE GET STAFF MEMBERS WHO ARE QUALIFIED AND CAN WITHSTAND RESTRICTED LIVING CONDITIONS.

B. STAFFING LEVEL. WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FUNCTION SURPRISINGLY WELL OVER PAST WEEKS WITH STAFF OF 15 AMERICANS. THIS HAS BEEN POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF CALIBER OF EMPLOYEES THAT WE HAVE AND BECAUSE MOST OF THEM CAN LOOK FORWARD TO FAIRLY EARLY LEAVE OR END OF TOUR. MOST OF THEM ARE ALSO OPTIMISTIC THAT SITUATION WILL IMPROVE AND THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO MOVE OUT TO APARTMENTS AND LIVE MORE NORMAL PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIVES SOON. THIS MAY OCCUR, BUT FOR SAKE OF THEIR SANITY AND WELL-BEING, I THINK WE HAVE TO PROVIDE NOW FOR APPROPRIATE RELIEF FROM LONG HOURS OF WORK AND CONFINEMENT DESCRIBED ABOVE. EVEN UNDER PRESENT TRYING CIRCUMSTANCES, I THINK WE COULD DO BETTER JOB AND MAINTAIN REASONABLE LEVEL OF MORALE BY INCREASING STAFF OF 14 TO 17. THIS WOULD PROVIDE SOME FLEXIBILITY SO THAT EMPLOYEES GET OCCASIONAL DAY OFF OR COULD AFFORD TO BE ILL WITHOUT CREATING A SERIOUS PROBLEM. MY PROPOSALS
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FOR INCREASE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(1) WHEN GEORGE LANE TAKES OVER AS CHARGE, THE POLITICAL OFFICER, PAUL MOLINEAUX, WHO HAS BEEN DOING THE DAILY SITREP, HAADLING AUB/AUH LIAISON MATTERS (ACTIVITIES THAT ARE LIKELY TO INCREASE AS WE PROVIDE MORE AID TO THE HOSPITAL) AND SUPERVISING RESIDUAL AID AND USIS OPERATIONS, WILL ALSO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR

ANY CURRENT POLITICAL REPORTING. I THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT LILLIAN WATERMAN BE RETURNED TO BEIRUT IN ORDER TO TAKE OVER MOST OF THE SITREP DRAFTING AND THE AUB/AUH LIAISON WORK. LILLIAN HAS BEEN MOST EFFECTIVE IN BOTH OF THESE AREAS, AND HER PRESENCE WOULD ADD SUBSTANTIALLY TO EMBASSY'S REPORTING OPERATION.

(2) LOIS TEPAS IS THE ONLY SECRETARY AT POST. SHE IS AN EXCEPTIONAL PERSON, CAPABLE OF WORKING 12 TO 14 HOURS A DAY SEVEN DAYS A WEEK WITHOUT COMPLAINT. EVEN SO, IT IS UNFAIR TO ASK HER TO MAINTAIN THIS PACE INDEFINITELY AND, FOR SECURITY REASONS, SHE IS NOT ALWAYS ABLE TO TYPE FOR OTHER AGENCIES REPRESENTED AT POST. SHE IS DESERVING OF SOME RELIEF, AND I RECOMMEND THAT GERRI O'BRIEN, WHO IS CURRENTLY IN DAMASCUS, BE RETURNED TO BEIRUT. GERRI IS A GOOD SECRETARY AND WOULD LIKE TO COME BACK, AND SHE HAS ADDED ADVANTAGE OF HAVING ALL THE CLEARANCES NECESSARY TO DO TYPING WHICH CERTAIN OFFICERS REQUIRE.

(3) AT PRESENT TIME, WE HAVE FOUR MARINES IN BEIRUT, INCLUDING NCOIC. THEY ARE ALL STANDING WATCH ON BASIS OF FOUR HOURS ON, EIGHT HOURS OFF, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD UP WITH THIS SCHEDULE AND FREQUENT ROTATION WILL BE NECESSARY. GIVEN DIFFICULTY OF TRAVEL FROM BEIRUT, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE WISE TO BRING IN FIFTH MARINE, WHICH WOULD GIVE THEM MINIMUM COMPLEMENT WITHOUT CONSTANT ROTATION THAT WILL OTHERWISE BE NECESSARY.

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(4) IN ADDITION, DEPT SHOULD BE PREPARED TO PROVIDE TDY SUPPORT FOR ANY PERIODS OF LEAVE OR EXTENDED ILLNESS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY SO FOR THE SECRETARIES AND COMMUNICATORS. I RECOGNIZE THAT BOTH CATEGORIES ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY, BUT THERE ARE DEFINITE ADVANTAGES TO BEING ABLE TO CALL ON PEOPLE FOR TDY WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH THIS POST AND CONDITIONS WHICH EXIST HERE. I RECOMMEND THAT HALLMAN TDY IN DAMASCUS BE CONTINUED AND THAT, WHEN C&R OFFICER DAVIS IS ABLE TO GET OUT, HALLMAN RETURN HERE AND DAVIS FILL THE TDY POST IN DAMASCUS. I RECOMMEND THAT LORRAINE SHULTZ BE MOVED TO DAMASCUS, WHERE SHE WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR TDY TO BEIRUT AS REQUIRED.

2. WE RECOGNIZE FULLY THAT ANY SUGGESTION THAT
OUR STAFF IN BEIRUT BE ENLARGED JRVT AFTER AN
EVACUATION WOULD APPEAR TO BE INCONSISTENT.
HOWEVER, WE MUST BE REALISTIC AS TO NEEDS AND
WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE HERE, AND THREE OFFICERS
MENTIONED ABOVE SHOULD BE MOVED BACK TO BEIRUT
WITHIN NEXT TWO TO THREE WEEKS UNLESS SITUATION
DETERIORATES DURING THIS PERIOD.
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